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BASIC EDUCATION AND THE NEW SOCIAL ORDER

by
M. C. DUBEY



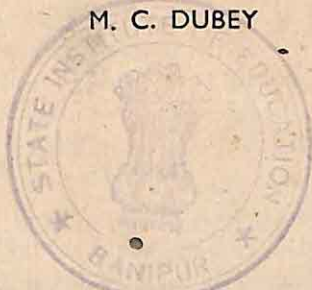
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FOREWORD

In view of the prevailing dearth of suitable literature for Basic education, the Union Ministry of Education have drawn up a scheme for production of literature and other material for Basic Education. This scheme consists of (1) Publication of monographs written by experts on different aspects of Basic Education ; (2) Production of guide-books for teachers of Basic schools ; (3) Production of supplementary reading material for Basic school children ; (4) Production of source books for Basic school teachers ; and (5) Production of craft material for Basic schools. The scheme was transferred to the National Institute of Basic Education sometime during the second week of August 1960. The present publication written by a well-known and experienced authority has been published already in Hindi in the series entitled 'Monographs'. It is now rendered in English and is published with the hope that that it will be found useful and will be read with interest.

• J.K. SHUKLA
Director

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Chapter I

Education needs a change—Why ?

All educational planning implies the building up of a sound society as its main objective. So the framework of education undergoes a change in accordance with a change in the social structure. It has ever been the chief aim of education to shape itself to suit requirements of the changing times.

Individual and social development go together. They are co-related. If we take the development of individual apart from that of society and make education exclusively the means of the up-growth of the former, we go against the principles of sociology and education both, for, the ignoring of their co-relation hinders the progress of individual. One cannot attain the desired degree of development apart from the other. Education thus defeats its own purpose. Man is born with a heredity and develops only in society. Society is the laboratory where man is moulded through experimentation. Individuals make society and society makes individuals. So the society of the enlightened individuals will be a cultured one, and the individual will bloom in a refined society alone. Man changes society through his own development and the reformed society becomes the cause of man's further development. That is why it is now accepted on all hands that the aim of education is to make man useful for society, by developing his potentialities. This alone can keep individual and social development in harmony and make individual a worthy and useful member of society. Education too needs a change, consistent with the stage of civilisation reached by society in its cultural, economic and other aspects. If appropriate timely changes are not made in the educational system, it ceases to be useful to contemporaneous society and loses its vitality, and, consequently, with the disappearance of harmony between individual and society, the development of both is arrested.

During the British rule the system of education enforced upon us, had only certain administrative needs in view, for which reason education was too costly to be of use for all. Only a very low percentage of the population could take advantage, while the vast majority remained unbenefited. Consequently, a gulf was created between the educated

and the uneducated classes. Education remained confined to bookish knowledge only and had no relevance to the problems of real life, for which reason practical efficiency remained neglected and no scope was left for the cultivation of social virtues. Mother-tongue was not the medium of education. Therefore, much of the children's energy was simply wasted, and whatever knowledge they could gain could not become part of their mental constitution. The system of education thus could not prove congenial to the culture and the requirements of the country.

We are now a free nation. Changes of far-reaching national and international importance are taking place and new problems are facing the citizens everyday. How, then, can education keep aloof from the new currents of change and proceed along the old stereotyped lines? The existing system of education has neither been affected by the recent national happenings, nor has it any definite ideal in view, so that it could make man a useful member of society and an active participant in the social activities. It, therefore, becomes incumbent upon us to mould the existing system of education quite in accordance with the needs of the changing structure of society.

The political structure of our free country is democratic. As laid down in the Constitution, our political ideals aim at a new social order based on justice, equality, liberty and fraternity. This is the very conception of a classless society absolutely free from exploitation. This is the foundation of social equality. Out of this will come the social virtues of non-violence (Ahimsa), love and co-operation, and because of self-discipline external control will be scarcely needed. This is the very conception of a socialistic pattern of society.

How far Basic education is going to fulfil the needs of our changing social order is to be considered in the following chapters of this booklet.

Chapter II

The Background of Basic education

In order to appreciate rightly the problems of education in India, we have to look back to the history of Indian education during the past hundred and twenty-five years. When the administration of India came into the hands of the East Indian Company, some of the Directors who were good-natured and broad-minded wanted education in this country to be conducted along the lines indicated by the traditional and cultural propensities of the people. They were willing to give due consideration to the culture of India in the field of education. They had a favourable opinion of the ancient culture, philosophy, literature and science of India. But there also were people like Macaulay and Trevelyan, who strongly held the view that love of culture which raised England to the heights of prestige and prosperity was undesirable for India. They opined that India needed only hard-working labourers, farmers and office clerks. They even went to the extent of belittling Indian literature as also that of all the Eastern countries. Macaulay remarked that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The Company then ruling over India only wanted interpreters who could establish contact between a handful of rulers and millions of the ruled. They also sought to form a new-class of natives who would, no doubt, be Indians by blood and colour but English in tastes, thoughts and intellectual leanings. The result was that this class could neither follow the English in all respects, nor maintain its own identity. During the reign of Lord William Bentinck and that of Lord Amherst a controversy arose as to which educational system was to be adopted, the oriental one or the occidental one. Finally it was decided that the occidental system should be adopted. But inspite of this decision the system that was introduced was not an exact imitation of the occidental system, but a mere bookish education, different from science, technology and handicrafts. This state of affairs continued till the agitation against the division of Bengal. Then voices were raised for the introduction of a national type of education, for, the country was to be freed from foreign domination, and democratic governments were to be established in the States.

In 1906 the Congress Party included in its agenda the question of

imparting a nationlistic type of education, the purpose being the stirrings up of the spirit of nationalism in the Indian people. Finally in 1937 with the formation of Congress Cabinets in the provinces a plan of basic national education was accepted by the Congress in the session at Haripura. It was insisted that education be imparted through the medium of mother-tongue and the different processes involved in productive crafts so that students could use their cognitive and motor organs and develop all their potentialities in a uniform way. They could thus learn to meet their personal and social needs and acquire ability and skill for social service through practical experience.

Education should effect a co-ordination of physical, intellectual, spiritual and moral activities. Education is to be related not only to the art of living, but also to the principles of life, so that a co-operative society could be built up. Man develops through co-operation. It is, therefore, very much desirable that principles of co-operation should be introduced in the frame-work of education. This is possible not through a mere bookish learning, but through creative and constructive work and fruitful labour as well. Work is worship. Therefore, work is the basis of the scheme of basic education. Ancient people used to prepare a thorough plan of whatever they wanted to do and carry it out to the last detail. The same craftsman with the same brain used to complete the whole work with uniform efficiency and co-ordination. The mind of the Indian child needs this very type of co-ordinated education. Let us illustrate this type of education by a simple example. When we teach a pupil all the processes involved in the production of cloth from cotton with scientific details, we can very easily co-ordinate the studies of agriculture, economics, political science, sociology, general science etc. around a simple thing, viz., cotton. How cotton attracted empire builders and created history is by itself an interesting study. The whole history of the British empire in India has been centred around cloth. This is why during the early days of national education educationists who wanted to stir up the sentiment of nationalism were attracted by cotton, spindle, and cloth.

Formerly a farmer was also a craftsman and a craftsman was a farmer. But later on the situation changed. The craftsman had to depend on foreign countries for the material needed; the carpenter in need of a pair of shoes preferred a foreign one to the one prepared by the village shoe-maker; the shoe-maker in need of utensils began to

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purchase cheaper alluminium utensils from town and the village potter's trade began to suffer. The potter began to purchase foreign cloth and the village weaver had to starve. In this way indigenous industries were destroyed and dependence on land gradually increased. Those who owned small pieces of land sold them out and began to cultivate on a contract basis bigger lands owned by others. Thus they ceased to be farmers and were reduced to the status of mere labourers. But when they could not earn enough wages in the village, they had to leave their families there and move out to cities in search of better wages. Thus the very structure of our civilisation and culture, our arts and crafts, our simple and happy village life and the balance between farming and industries were all lost. Their place was taken by densely populated cities and their highly artificial life. Gradually the prosperity of villages is now being diverted to the cities which are depriving the village life of its charm. All this has resulted in the disintegration of the village community, which was self-sufficient. Rural arts and crafts began to disappear. The wealth of villages began to be drained to cities and from there to foreign countries. The whole of this history as well as the story of imperialism can be very well read through the story of cotton. This is what is generally called education through the medium of crafts. This is learning through work, acquisition of knowledge through the practice of work. If we exercise our intelligence we can so plan work that it can prove the easiest and the best means of imparting knowledge. After making a detailed study we can impart the knowledge of various branches of learning efficiently by arranging them suitably around some form of productive work. It is on this economic, social, moral and psychological background that the scheme of basic education has been outlined. This scheme aims at making man a healthy, happy and co-operative citizen, not on the basis of a mere bookish learning but by co-ordinating the training of hands, heart and head. There is a simple saying current among villagers that a little education tempts one to leave the plough and high education tempts him to leave home. It draws a very accurate picture of the uselessness of the present system of education. What a queer system it really is which makes us give up our own industries and occupations, thus rendering us utterly dependent on others, which draws us away from the pure village atmosphere, which makes us apathetic to the charms of village life ! Is all this advancement or deterioration ? The scheme of basic education includes education of the hands as an essential part, which will revive in us love for industries and respect for manual labour and thus provide us a healthy atmosphere. There knowledge can

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be acquired only through the medium of manual work. This will make us practical in our mental outlook and a corporate life will refine our hearts. In this way a fully developed individual will emerge and a new society will be created. This is why the scheme of Basic education has been universally recognised as the foundation of national education.

Chapter III

What is Basic education ?

Basic Education is the education of life, through life and for the sake of life. This formula epitomizes all the essentials of the scheme of basic education. A good life should be the aim of education. A good life is one in which a man develops his individual potentialities and becomes thereby a useful member of the community in which he lives. Individual and social abilities should be developed side by side, so that a perfectly balanced personality may be created,

'Education of life' implies that life is the object of education. Education should include all those factors which can develop the physical, mental, moral, cultural and spiritual aspects of human personality. It should enable man to be the least dependent on others. Man should cultivate the virtues of self-dependence and co-operativeness to the highest possible degree. He should acquire sufficient knowledge of the normal healthy relations of himself, his family and the community at large. He should know his duties and responsibilities with respect to himself, his family and the community and behave accordingly. He should be able to pursue literature and fine arts during his leisure. Even as a balanced diet contains all the nourishing constituents in desirable quantities, so a balanced personality requires all the desirable traits in right proportion. That is why literacy by itself cannot be identified with education, but is merely one of the means of education.

Ideas lead to conduct and conduct results in the formation of dispositions. When it is said that basic education is 'education through life' what is meant is that ideas in the form of behaviour dispositions should become part and parcel of our life. This thing can be achieved through action or conduct alone. Life itself is the laboratory in which we experiment with various forms of action. Should this not be the case, education will be divorced from daily life, ideas will become insipid and life will become devoid of thought. In this way life and thought will drift wide apart. These considerations lead all educationists to recognise the principle of imparting education through the medium of reality. The scheme of basic education has adopted this principle and

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recommended that schools be reorganised and given a social form and a free scope be allowed to social activities therein.

Basic Education is the education of basis and the basis of education.

When it is once accepted that education is intimately related to life, then it is but natural to give priority to the basic needs of life in education. Food, clothing, shelter, clean and healthy living, the cultivation of aesthetic and cultural qualities and development of social life through the exercise of recreative and delightful tendencies and absolutely indispensable for an all-round balanced development of man. Thus whatever satisfies our basic needs is the medium of our scheme of education. And this is the very basis of our education. That is why this scheme adopts a five-point programme. The five essential items of this programme are : (1) a clean and healthy life, (2) social education and social service, (3) basic crafts and self-dependence, (4) cultural and aesthetic activities and (5) theory and practice of the principles involved therein.

This is basic education and the basis of education. The stronger the basis, the more stable will be the house erected thereon.

Basic education is the practice of work and acquisition of knowledge in one.

The fundamental concept of basic education is to make productive crafts the medium of education. It is often questioned whether knowledge of the various branches of learning can be possibly attained through handicraft. A detailed study of the industrial processes will reveal the true answer and satisfy the sceptic in this respect. From the very beginning of creation man has been utilising the gifts of nature for his own comfort and prosperity. Observation, investigation and experimentation have increasingly become the means of his education. Raw material was taken from nature. Industry turned it into things useful for society. Thus craft became the connecting link between society and nature. In this way nature, craft and society are the three centres of education. Industrial education does not aim at the mere mechanical attainment of manual skill in some handicraft. Its true objective is making a thorough inquiry into the 'why', 'how', 'when' and 'who' etc. of the processes involved in industry in a scientific way, weave work and

knowledge together as warp and woof and thus make it the means of acquiring knowledge. This explains the saying that in the factory we work for the sake of work, whereas in the school we work for the sake of knowledge. Schools thus become educational laboratories. With the aid of craft education man will gain health through labour, self-dependence through industry, devotion to work and a scientific aptitude through action, orderliness and cleanness through work, forbearance through corporate life, spirit of service through cooperation, satisfaction of the thirst for knowledge and self-study through skill in work, imaginativeness through construction, refinement of instincts and impulses, devotion to duty etc. He will thus cultivate innumerable human virtues and will lay down the foundation of the edifice of true education. This scheme will, in the long run, produce scientists and philosophers of a high order. This is the motive behind giving primary importance to work and making it the means of imparting knowledge.

Mother-tongue as the medium of education.

The fundamental basis of education is a proper knowledge of the mother-tongue. Language is the vehicle of thought. Man can give expression to his ideas with the aid of language. Unless one acquires the ability to speak, read and write correctly, he cannot give lucidity to his ideas. The moral and cultural development of man becomes possible when he becomes familiar with the traditional ideas, sentiments and ideals of his community through his own mother-tongue and gets inspiration from them. Through it alone the cultural aptitude of the child finds expression and through it alone he acquires originality of ideas. Education can be popularised through the mother-tongue alone. Thus we avoid waste of energy and knowledge acquired in a natural and spontaneous way becomes part and parcel of the pupil's mental constitution. That is why the basic education scheme lays emphasis on imparting education through the medium of mother-tongue.

Basic education is child-centred

It is not proper to call a child the miniature of the fully grown-up man. We cannot form any idea of the child's nature and needs merely on the basis of those of the grown-up men. The child has got its own unique individuality. One child differs from another. He is not a mere passive being to be easily moulded at will. He rather is an active

being, engaged in some sort of activity to satisfy some need. That is why he can not be confined within the four walls of a school, nor can his education be confined to books alone. He loves freedom ; he is ceaselessly active ; he is self-guided and self-dependent by disposition. Therefore such a social atmosphere should be created in school as can enable the child to acquire social fitness while developing his individual qualities. This aim can be achieved by introducing crafts into the curriculum.

Contact between school, home and community

For an all-round development of the child it is necessary that an intimate contact be established between school, home and community. In this triangle of development child, parents and teacher-all the three are correlated. John Dewey, a great American educationist, defines education as the reconstruction of one's experiences while participating in social activities. From this very point of view school is called not a mere miniature of society, but the society itself. School life should be the mirror of all the home and social activities. Vinoba has expressed the same idea when he says that sociology should aim at the creation of a school home and that education should aim at the establishment of a home school. What he means to say is that school should be turned into home and home into school. In other words, school should not remain confined within its four walls, but extend to home and the community. This scheme will not only educate children, but also provide them social training.

The field of Basic education

The scheme recommends compulsory basic national education for children between six and fourteen. In a democratic country compulsory education upto a definite stage is absolutely indispensable. One of the fundamental concepts of the scheme is that education should begin not only from birth, but from conception to death. Western educationists express the same idea when they say that education should extend from 'cradle to grave'. Education should cover the whole period from infancy to maturity. Then will it be a truly public education. In order to systematise the scheme from this point of view experiments are being made with the compulsory education of children as also with pre-basic, post basic and adult education. It is to be noted that in some parts basic education

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has been confined to the primary education of the fifth standard only. But in the original scheme eight years' systematic education has been recommended.

Production and education

In the fundamental concept of this scheme self-sufficiency has been given an important place. Under this scheme the salary of the teacher will be covered by the earnings from craft-work, though the point has been quite controversial. However, it may safely be accepted that the productive aspect of education is not less important than its creative aspect and hence it cannot be ignored. In fact, production is the criterion by which the worth of work done methodically can be judged. Work done with scientific knowledge becomes the medium of education. Skill comes as a result of work done with intelligence. With skill in work understanding becomes sharp. Therefore, production can not be ignored. From the stand point of education as well as economics proper attention should be paid to production. This does not at all imply that basic education teaches the processes of productive crafts for the sake of production alone. The sponsors of this scheme have unequivocally said that crafts are taught only as the medium of education, so that the physical, mental and moral capacities of the child could be developed properly. Craft possesses the invisible magnetic power of correlating various branches of knowledge. The fruitful processes involved in craft work illuminate various subjects of study. Craft work is introduced in the scheme of education with this aim in view. If it is ignored, the educational importance of crafts work is lost.

Chapter IV

Indian Democracy and Basic education

The evolution of human civilisation reveals the fact that in the early days of human history, when there was nothing like social organisation, man wandered alone amidst natural surroundings. How to preserve himself was his sole business then. It has ever been instinctive with man to preserve his existence. The result was that while providing himself with the means of living, man began to use violence against man, which was detrimental to his own individual existence. To stop this violence society organised itself and subjected itself to the control of a central power. In this way, it is presumed, man brought state into existence for the sake of peace and freedom. This was the beginning of centralisation. But the result of this form of centralisation was beyond the conception of the primitive man, for, the violence which he wanted to check by means of the central power began to gape wider and wider, like the mouth of Sursa, in the guise of exploitation. So, alarmed with the results of this experimentation, society tried to wrest the powers of government back to itself. This is in brief the story of the origin of democracy. Thus we see that the history of social organisation has been the story of a series of continuous experiments with various systems of government right from patriarchy of hoary primitive times to a large variety of governmental systems of modern times.

Democratic government has various forms, the common feature of all being priority given to public opinion. Democracy has been defined variously ; but the definition given by Abraham Lincoln, viz., that it is government of the people by the people and for the people, i. e., government by all for the good of all, has gained the highest popularity. Mazzini's definition, viz., that it is progress of all by all under a supreme and most enlightened leadership, is nearer the true ideal of democracy, though it is slightly different from that of Lincoln. True democracy prevailed in the ancient city states of Greece. It was practicable there because of their smaller size. In Buddhist India the country was divided into a number of small states governed by their respective councils, which adopted a system very much allied to Greek democracy. The rulers were chosen by people who ran the

administration on the advice of representatives chosen by people. The whole of India was divided into innumerable janpads governed by innumerable people's councils. Every city and village was a democracy in miniature. In that period every ruler considered himself the best servant of the people. The people too were willing to make any sacrifice for the sake of such ideal rulers. The monarchical states too fully honoured the voice of the public. The reign of Ram (Ram-rajya) was the ideal from which the then monarchies drew inspiration. Public opinion was accorded due respect. The king subordinated his will to law; he was not above law. The king's advisors were selfless and righteous.

Monarchies of this type can in no case be thought to be inferior to democracy. Thus we find elements of democracy in monarchy and those of monarchy in democracy. The best and the worst types can be found in each. So far as the principle is concerned, democratic government is more appealing to the peoples' mind, because the governed have control over the government. This explains why the sentiments of nationalism are so strong in democratic countries. The system of a representative government, creation of legislative assemblies, organisation of a responsible government etc. are not new to our country. They are certainly our old institutions.

Now, the states having grown in size, the democracy of olden times is not workable. It is the representative type of government which prevails in democratic states today. Representatives are elected by people. Every adult has right to vote. He cannot be deprived of that right for any religious, racial or other reason. This system of government possesses many virtues, but there are some vices as well. In this system votes are counted; they are not weighed. In other words, importance is attached to number, not to quality. It gives equal importance to two individuals, irrespective of differences in their intellectual attainments and intelligence levels. Sandal wood and *babool* (a more fuel tree) are thus put on par. Under the circumstances it becomes imperative that every individual attains a certain level of education. It is more so in this system than in any other. In the national basic scheme of education compulsory education for children between the ages of six and fourteen is laid down. It recommends mother tongue as the medium of instruction, so that education may be popular and easily obtainable. Children between six and fourteen years of age have a very

receptive mind. So, from the point of view of education this is the most suitable period.

Mere literacy is not enough for social life. Two things are very much desirable, viz., the mental development of the pupil upto a definite level and the acquisition of ability to support himself. He should achieve his progress, while observing the rules of social conduct, and accelerate the progress of human race by helping others in their progress. This is what is known as the principle of co-existence. This is the synthesis of both individualistic and collective theories of education. From this very point of view basic education scheme lays down that every individual should develop his own mental faculties while living in society and should thus become useful for it.

Education is the foundation of social organisation. The educational scheme of a country is always grounded on its social, economic and political organisation. Our democratic constitution has implicitly laid down four principles, viz., those of equality, fraternity, liberty and justice. The edifice of democracy is to be built up on these four pillars. Basic education aims at the strengthening of these four pillars of our democracy.

The first principle on which we should concentrate is equality. The success of democracy depends on equality. Foreign rule almost destroyed our traditional village schools, centralised the educational set-up and exercised full control over it for its own selfish gain. Education thus became too expensive and the majority of the population had to go without it. Consequently, the population was divided into two sections, viz., the proletariat and the intelligentsia. The latter began to disparage labour and the proletariat kept themselves aloof from intellectual work. Thus intelligence became impracticable on the one hand and work lost efficiency on the other. Intelligence became fruitless and work became non-intelligent. As a matter of fact, intelligence and work are closely related. Work develops intelligence and intelligence adds efficiency to work. Therefore, mutual co-operation of the intelligentsia and the proletariat is indispensable for the perfection of society. This will be the basis of equality. Keeping this objective in view, the basic education scheme has adopted the principle of education through industry. The other branches of education have been organised around this central point. Industrial education illumines the whole body

of knowledge concerning the various processes involved in industry. This scheme of industrial education involves the concept of turning the intelligentsia into the proletariat and vice versa. By means of this the individual will co-ordinate his physical and mental powers and attain a more perfect form of humanity. At the same time mutual 'give and take' between the intelligentsia and the proletariat will become possible, which will result in building up a healthy and united nation.

The second point of concentration is liberty. Without repeating the various experiments made for the organisation of society, it will be enough to say this much that in the course of establishing democratic government decentralization of the administrative machinery was deemed necessary and authority was vested in the people. For its success economic decentralisation too was deemed necessary. The decentralisation of productive machinery also became important. All this means that in order to keep individual and social liberty intact administrative machinery should necessarily be under the control of society and the latter should have freedom to fulfil its own needs. With these aims in view, it has been recommended in the programme of basic education that schools should be turned into self-guided democratic centres. In this way by giving practical training of civic duties and responsibilities we hope to produce in the child mind permanent dispositions for the latter. This is the first step in the process of decentralisation of administrative machinery. We aim at making man fit for fulfilling his own needs of life with the help of industrial and other social activity programmes. In a mutually helpful society the sense of co-existence is strengthened by the spirit of reciprocity. That is why it is insisted that school should be the society itself in miniature, reflecting social life through its social activities. The education which encourages industries leads us towards the achievement of this second objective, viz., liberty. Experience can be weighed in the balance of practicability. Loading the mind with those ideas only which have never been tested at the touch-stone of experience is a kind of mental slavery. The basic education scheme provides the pupil opportunities to acquire knowledge independently by taking part in purposeful programmes connected with his life. The role of the teacher here is merely that of a guide. So the pupil develops a free thinking and independent mind. There are all possibilities in the framework of basic education for the development of qualities of the individual. A free society is built up by open-minded individuals alone. Discipline too should be self-imposed, so that every individual may get sufficient

opportunity for the development of his own qualities and be a help rather than a hinderance to the development of others. Let self-discipline grow to its highest pitch to make individual freedom co-extensive with social freedom. These who are subject to others cannot build up a society of free men, nor can an independent personality emerge from a subject people. For the preservation of freedom a healthy relation between the two is essential and this can be possible only by decentralisation.

The third point to be considered is fraternity. To inculcate this idea the principle of fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man should be adopted. Religion has an important contribution here. Religion has been at the root of many conflicts in world history. What we need is a full faith in religion which may create a bond of love between man and man. Religious bigotry has made man the enemy of man. Self-centredness has replaced catholicity. In the new programme of education, also known as the 'new education', it is insisted that the school should be reorganised in the form of a family. In this scheme sociology and education have been correlated. In this family and social life come closer together and the sense of fraternity is strengthened. The inclusion of collective prayer in the programme of community life brings about religious tolerance and the attitude of respect for all religions. The study of the common elements of all the religions with an unbiased mind strengthens belief in the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. The evolution of one single human culture for the whole world can just become possible, if we make an impartial study of the lofty ideas of the great men of all countries.

The fourth point to be considered is justice. Social justice is very essential to achieve the things pointed out above. Every individual member of society should possess as much freedom to effect his own development as is possessed by any other member. Equality of opportunity is the primary justice. All must get equal opportunities to get the benefits of education. Just as we possess equal rights to use air and water, so we ought to have equal right of getting education. Social injustice in this respect cannot find a place in a society which is rooted in truth, non-violence and love. During foreign rule this fact was ignored and no attempt was made to popularise education. The system that was introduced was meant for the benefit of a few only. Another glaring defect of the system was a lack of coordination between the education of brain and that of heart. As a result of it intellectual deve-

lopment was proportionately higher than spiritual development. In the struggle for existence the intellectual race has been so keen that violence has assumed frightful proportions, and because of the neglect of social justice, man has engaged himself in the degeneration of man. Violence has eclipsed justice. Therefore, it has now become very much desirable that mental and moral development be co-ordinated with physical development, so that a balanced personality may be created. If this could be achieved, social justice would again find a place of honour in human heart.

Full utilisation of the opportunities of personal development and helping social development through active co-operation is the primary formula for establishing true democracy. Gandhiji said that the individual should merge himself in the development of society. In his view the sole means of attaining immortality in society is that the individual should make his full contribution to keep the society going. In this way individual will become part of a developed society and enrich his own qualities. Then by making his own contribution to the unabated progress of society he will attain his own immortality with that of society.

Thus the atmosphere of equality, liberty, fraternity, justice, love and non-violence will be created in society.

Chapter V

Basic education and Social Organisation

Education is the means of leading a nation or community towards a particular goal. An educational tradition is established according to the needs of a country or nation. Therefore, a system of education should be strong enough to effect revolutionary changes in society. School is the place where a revolution starts. Society will be built up according to the system of education that prevails.

Today society with its traditional ideas and beliefs is drifting away from the natural course of human life and we observe a spontaneous change in the structure of society. Social life has been vitiated by violence, injustice, conflict, exploitation, selfishness and many other vices. Man has become narrow-minded and cannot go beyond the circle of selfish interests. He does not even think of the good of society. He does not realise that he too is a part of society and cannot effect his own progress unless he works for the uplift of the whole society. As a matter of fact, his personal good consists in the social good.

The existing social organisation should go and society should be reorganised on the foundation of equality, love, justice, truth, non-violence and co-operation. The differences of rich and poor, farmer and labourer, proletariat and intelligentsia should be obliterated. Let an end be put to extortion, spoliation and exploitation. Let the sense of co-existence be strengthened so that the dream of a classless and exploitation-free society may come true. The contribution of basic education to this goal will now be discussed.

Increase in Production

Development of a country necessarily depends upon that of the means of production. India is an economically backward country. The majority of its population is still in need of food, clothing and shelter. In the basic education scheme, education centres around basic crafts and thus it aims at the fulfilment of the above needs. Labour is the foundation of industries. In Basic education labour has been given

dignified place so that favourable attitudes towards labour may be nurtured and strengthened in the child mind from the very beginning and the possibilities of industrial development may thus be increased. Labour is the mean of education. It also wipes out the difference of labouring and intellectual classes and thus becomes the means of bringing about social solidarity. Labour awakens the dormant qualities of man. Intellect saves from superfluous labour and the latter refines the former. Intellect and labour together build up a balanced personality, which builds up a prosperous, rich, non-violent and co-operative society. This is the age of science, and scientific education can successfully be imparted through the medium of industrial processes. If the scientific progress of to-day is wedded to non-violence, we can produce such healthy, happy and helping citizens as can channel the work of national reconstruction on to the path of progress. Utilization of natural resources and increase of production are necessary for the increase of the wealth of nation. There is no dearth of man-power in India; the dearth is of work. That is why we need a scheme which can provide men with work, so that production may be increased. To fulfil this end the basic scheme resorts to basic crafts.

Village Uplift

While diverting attention to village community it should be kept in mind that India consists mainly of villages and 88 percent of her population lives in villages. Agriculture is the main industry of India. The basic culture not only of India, but also of the whole mankind was rural. This culture was developed, nourished and preserved for a very long time in villages. Villages had sprung long before cities came into existence and, as it appears, in future too villages will continue as the fountain-head of this basic culture. The life of villages is natural, while that of cities is artificial. Saint Vinoba says that villages are God-made, and cities are man-made. But so long as both villages and cities exist, a healthy intercourse between them becomes necessary for the development of both. Today villages are neglected and they have lost their charm. But if we plan the reconstruction of a united nation, we cannot ignore the needs of the rural population, which, of course, is a very great part of the population inhabiting this sub-continent. This is the demand of social and national justice. We do not think of turning villages into cities, but it certainly is our plan to create a pure clean, healthy and cultural atmosphere in villages and thus change village

life from the one which is despised to the one which is very much sought after. A study of the basic education programmes amply reveals that the scheme aims at village uplift by keeping fully in view the needs of rural areas by giving a place to cottage and village industries and by establishing a closer contact with the life of village people. By village industries decentralisation of both capital and power becomes possible. Then every craftsman will get ample opportunities to develop his manual skill. He will also be the owner of his machinery. Thus neither wealth will be centralised, nor will there be problems which are threatening World peace. Some people have a wrong notion that this scheme is meant for villages only. Education for the villages will differ very slightly from education for the cities, because education will have to be adapted to the slightly different surroundings. So far as the principle of national education are concerned, they will be uniformly applicable to both. Thus by mutual 'give and take' between village and city communities the development of both will be enhanced and the national organisation too will be strengthened.

Removal of untouchability

Untouchability is a curse on society, which creates a gulf between man and man and thus weakens social solidarity. This excessively undesirable position has been created by an exclusive adoration of intellect and disrespect of labour. One who labours very hard, however important his services may be to society, is held in contempt. These deep-rooted notions must be changed. Intellect and labour must be harmonised in the scheme of life values. All should work according to their capacities and should get according to their needs. This is social justice. No work of social service is inferior to any other work. It is not only improper but also highly unjust to think that one is superior and the other inferior. In our country today the society is divided into classes either on the racial or caste basis or the economic basis. The economic classes are those of rich gentry and shabbily clad labourers. One of these classes is sinking in luxury and the other is being crushed by the drudgery of labour. Both are to be saved. Let the one resort to labour and the other to intellectual work. With this aim in view the basic scheme makes industry and labour the medium of education and gives schools the form of society in miniature. When labour is made equally compulsory for all, every one will work co-operatively with others. Labour will, then, become the basis of the acquisition of knowledge equally for all. This

sort of life in school will wipe out class differences. Laboriousness, respect for all and deriving pleasure out of service, are the tests of energetic and scholarly people. Therefore, removal of untouchability becomes the foremost duty of every good man.

Equality.

Equality means putting an end to class differences. When education is made compulsory for children between six and fourteen, the rich and the poor will be equally benefited. By making education and labour uniformly compulsory for all, feelings of difference will go and the possibilities of exploitation will be decreased. Labour will help children in living a life of self-dependence. Education will make them conscious of their rights and duties. Equality of opportunity will minimise economic differences and people will be brought closer to one another. Cottage and village industries will help economic decentralisation. These also possess the invisible power of destroying differences and keeping individual liberty intact. When schools are reorganised in the form of a society in the miniature along democratic lines, then the qualities of citizenship will emerge. Thus the school will serve as the first laboratory of administrative decentralization, in which children will learn by experimentation to live as a wakeful public and as responsible administrators. This scheme will be able to bring about economic and social equality. Indian socialism aims at this very type of equality.

Dignity of Women.

Equal co-operation of men and women in social life is very much desirable. Woman is complementary to man. So the development of women is as much necessary as that of men. According to Saint Vinoba woman is the embodiment of non-violence. He conceives non-violence as love without limits and interprets love as power to bear suffering. These qualities are found in very women in high degrees. Nehru too expresses the same idea when he says that woman is the symbol of non-violence, tenderness, service and love. As a matter of fact, she is the divine mother in a different guise. So she deserves respect from all. There are some who look down upon the domestic work done by women. This is quite unjust. There are some families which confine women to servitude and do not allow them opportunities of education etc. This is a sort of social injustice. Basic education tries to keep education free from

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Chapter VI

The Machine Age and Basic education

India is mainly an agricultural country. But with the scientific progress of the age she too is making headway towards mechanisation. Our five year plans are continuously changing the shape of our industries and crafts. Our cottage and village industries too could not remain unaffected by this change. And it is but natural that all this should leave an appreciable impression on the economy of our country.

The business of education then becomes to prepare good citizens to fit in the structure of this progressive society. Education cannot keep itself aloof from this social and economic change. As a matter of fact, this social change can be reflected only in those schools which adopt the system of basic education. They are to guide the youth and children for a new social organisation. The system, programme and method of education are to be adapted to the changes taking place all round.

This is the reason why productive work has been given a prominent place and made the foundation of education in the basic scheme. In the beginning this scheme was subjected to much criticism. But later on as the principles of activity-centred education and education through the medium of actual instruments gained currency, basic education was recognised as an art of education. But so far as industry is concerned, people are still sceptical about its utility, because, they want a rapid advance of the country towards mechanisation and do not find any place for these cottage and village industries in the modern age. It is wrong to think that basic education is opposed to the use of machines. Even the most ordinary tools used in cottage and village industries come in the category of machines. Thus the spindle is a machine and the spinning wheel is a machine bigger than that. This scheme is not opposed to the use of even the biggest machines. But the question is. How many machines of this type can be distributed among innumerable children and made the means of their education ?

Another question is whether machines will be useful or harmful to the ordinary people. Will the use of big machines not increase the

percentage of the unemployed? The economic problem of India is different from that of other countries. We have lack of work, not of working hands. Our plans should provide suitable work to more and more persons. Of course, the national industry of the majority of people in this country is agriculture; but it can provide them work only for a few months of the year. Therefore, to provide work during the remaining months of the year we have to look up to cottage industries which accordingly have an important place in the economic policy of the country.

Gandhiji has himself said: I welcome the machine which will unburden the millions dwelling in cottages. I would not care if our villages got electricity and the villages used their tools with the aid of electricity. I would not even care if all the articles needed by my country were manufactured by three thousand labourers instead of three millions, provided that the three millions are not rendered idle and workless. The heavy machinery for work of public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour has its inevitable place, but all that would be owned by the State and used entirely for the benefit of the people.

From this very point of view industries have been arranged in three categories, viz., (1) cottage industries, (2) village industries and (3) national industries. The basic scheme gives industries of the first category a place in the primary classes. The industries of the second category find a place in secondary schools. So far as the industries of the third category are concerned, they shall, according to the conception of a socialistic society, surely be, centralised, shall not be made a means of personal gain. As a matter of fact, these industries will serve, in the scheme of basic education, as the universities of higher education. Here teachers and pupils will take the place of owners and labourers. But what will be the starting point of this national process of advancing towards higher industries? The answer to this question is that training in home industries will be the first step in this direction and cottage, village and national industries will have to be fitted in the sequence of its gradual development. Therefore, the act of giving basic education the shape of industry-centred education should be deemed as very prudential from the standpoint of the changing economy of the country as well as of social organisation.

Now a second question is as to the extent to which the pupils educated under the basic scheme will be fit to handle machines. A simple answer may just be that if pupils who have received a mere bookish education and have never worked with their hands can be considered fit, then, certainly, those who work with both hands and are accustomed to a laborious life must be fitter for the job. Productive work has been given a place in the basic scheme not with the intention of making the pupil an expert in a particular industry. On the contrary, the sponsors of the scheme clearly visualised that through the medium of industry the pupil will have a direct acquaintance with his social and natural surroundings and his knowledge will thus be closer to life. When all the pupils are engaged in industries, then with a increase in their industrial ability they also develop qualities like co-operativeness, self-dependence, dutifulness, fulfilment of responsibilities, keenness of observation, scientific attitude, concentration and so on, which are very much desirable socially and are also favourable for the needs of this machine age.

In this machine age basic education has got some additional value as well. The child engaged in industry gets the honour and satisfaction of having created some thing. In a factory this sort of thing is hard to find. Basic education plans the creation of a balanced personality through work. It will produce a harmonious development of physical, mental and moral faculties.

The impression that basic education is intended for rural areas only is also misleading. As a matter of fact, it is a scheme of national education which is equally useful for both urban and rural areas. The sponsors of the scheme have clearly stated that the craft chosen should conform to the surroundings of the child. Usually the fundamental needs of both the areas are common. This proves that the scheme with slight adaptations can be useful for both. It is certainly true that any of the industries prevalent in urban areas cannot be taken as a basic industry, because it ought to possess sufficient potentialities of being made the medium of education. With the progress of mechanisation rural areas will get more and more electrical equipment and heavy machinery and the means of communication will gradually improve. Then gradually villages and cities will come closer and closer and their intercourse will grow in intensity. Thus the difference between their conditions will gradually minimise. So, the basic scheme must be uniformly

applied to both the areas. In villages children naturally become familiar with their family crafts, because under the circumstances, they have to help their parents in their work. In the cities, on the other hand, the children entirely depend on bookish knowledge and do not get opportunity to acquire such familiarity. That is why the introduction of this scheme in cities becomes the more essential. When this is done the misconception that it is an inferior type of education and meant strictly for villages will automatically go. To revive this misconception the State Governments have recently prepared educational programmes which can be enforced in both the areas in equally well. Thus basic education will render children of both the rural and urban areas fit to fulfil the needs of this scientific machine age by making them use their hands and legs and creating in them devotion for work and labour.

Chapter VII

Civic Education through Basic education

As the social circle of man is growing larger and larger, the need of his civic education is becoming more and more important. This need is even more keenly felt in democratic system in which every individual can live as the ruler and the ruled. New discoveries have surely expanded the size of the world, but with the improvement of the means of communication in this age of science the world has really become smaller than what it was. Formerly establishing contact with the neighbouring countries took months, but now this can be done in a few days or even a few hours. It means that the contact of man with the society at large is becoming closer. Civic education is but the name of the education which aims at making such contact healthier.

Herbert Spencer, an Educationist, has given a due place to civic education in his five-point programme while considering the fundamentals of education. The five points of this programme are : (1) self-preservation, (2) earning one's living, (3) procreation and nurture of children, (4) civic education and (5) utilisation of leisure. As we need quantities of various nourishing elements in due proportion, which make a balanced diet, so we need civic education to develop a balanced personality. Now the question is : What is the novelty here ? Was civic education not given a place in pre-Spencerian educational system ? Can the desirable civic qualities not be developed in children by teaching them civics or by preaching moral sermons ? The answer is simple enough. We have been teaching civics and preaching morals for a long period of time. In spite of this we have not yet become good citizens. As a matter of fact, society itself is the laboratory of conduct. The cultivation of civic virtues cannot possibly depend on a mere bookish education. They should rather be practised in the concrete situations of life. It will yield better results. Let children be given suitable opportunities during their educational career to develop these virtues and make them part of their character. Let us create an atmosphere in which they may get a practical training to develop desirable civic qualities.

Every activity included in the basic education system serves as the medium of civic education. The truth of this statement is borne out by the five-point programme of basic education. For instance, it is laid down there that training in a healthy and clean life should be imparted. It is not only beneficial to the individual, but it also is a social duty. Physical health is indispensable for mental health. And it is equally indispensable for social service, because the latter is only possible through the medium of a sound body. Cleanness of the surroundings is related to personal cleanness. So personal cleanness in the programme assumes the form of collective cleanness. The sphere of cleanness thus expands and covers the whole society. A second item of the programme is education of a basic craft and self-dependence. This kind of education is intended to make children laborious, to awaken in their minds respect for labour and to inculcate in them the sense of equality by uprooting the sense of social differences. Education through industry does not merely give them abstract knowledge, but correlates their knowledge with life through a direct practical training and builds up a balanced personality for them. Similarly, cultural and aesthetic activities included in the programme aim at the enhancement of their happiness and the preservation and development of their cultural traditions. India has been the fountain-head of various cultural types as well as a meeting place of different cultures. She can unify all the cultures by absorbing their differences. This is the secret of the continuity of Indian culture. So, civic education should enable us to understand and develop the cultural traditions. It finds a due place in the basic education programme. A good citizen should also feel dignified while engaged in labour and should derive pleasure out of service. So, social education and social service too form part of the basic education programme. The school itself has been given the form of society and made the laboratory of social education. There pupils get ample opportunities of performing their social duties, of understanding their rights and fulfilling their responsibilities. In the school community pupils put the rules of society in practice and turn them into permanent habits, which is a good preparation for the future civic life. All this proves that the basic education programme is quite favourable for the development of civic virtues.

The constitution of India assures every citizen of the right of equality. Physical, mental and intellectual differences are innate. Individual differences have always been there and will ever remain; but economic differences are man-made and can, therefore, be obliterated.

So long as the economic system of the country does not change, equality will remain a dream. So, if we want to realise the goal of equality, our economic system must have a radical change. The philosophy of basic education suggests decentralisation of industries as the only solution of this problem. A citizen educated under the basic scheme will not be a mere labourer, but a craftsman, a scientist and an artist-all in one, such that instead of living as a parasite on the labour of others he will be able to carry on his own burden through his own labour. The labouring man will also realise the value of labour. Thus the existing gulf between the labourer and the intellectual and the exploitation of the former by the latter will meet their end.

The basic school is not a mere school, but a well organised centre of social education. The school community will not always remain confined inside the four walls of the school, but can expand to include the whole village, the state, the nation and even the whole world in it. The community life or collective activity creates in children the feeling of co-operation rather than that of rivalry. They take the school as their own family and behave like members of the same family. Whatever they do, they always keep the interest of the school in mind, though they also know that the benefit will be shared by the members. The thing produced by their collective effort becomes the object of their collective love. Thus their goodwill is aroused for the community property and community members. This feeling can be developed into universal love provided it receives proper guidance. Sometimes people get the wrong idea that citizenship or nationalism is hostile to universal love. But training first starts in a small unit and then its sphere is expanded gradually. If we drop a pebble in water, it creates a series of circles of waves. The nearer circles are smaller but more distinct, while the distant ones are larger but less distinct, and the final one becomes so indistinct that it appears to merge its existence in the infinite. The example illustrates the expansion of citizenship very accurately. The initial training gradually expanded can develop citizenship into cosmopolitanism. A question about principle can surely be asked : What principle should the society adopt ? Should we be guided by the principle of 'live and let others live', or should we adopt the principle of 'live for the sake of others', or should we take the maxim 'let us live, no matter what happens to others' as our ideal and raise the palace of our pleasure upon the ruins of others ? If nationality is so narrow, then there can be no room for internationalism in it. India believes in her traditional ideals

of truth and non-violence. So, these very ideals are the foundation of her educational scheme. Devotion to truth and tolerance of alien religions and thoughts have ever characterised the perennial culture of India. The basic education plans to make the child religiously, socially and culturally tolerant, so that he may be free from racial, religious, linguistic, cultural and political narrow-mindedness, be serviceable to the whole of mankind, and thus become a citizen of the world.

Chapter VIII

Basic education and Religious education

In the old traditions of India education and religion have been intimately connected with each other. The work of imparting education was entrusted to religious teachers. Their ashrams were the schools. Religion had no existence apart from practical life. Every activity of life was guided by rules of religion. The whole social life was interpenetrated by religion. The religion which does not pervade life is no religion at all. Life and religion cannot follow two different roads. If religious rites are restricted to particular times and places, then we certainly do not get the liberty of being irreligious at other times and places. Therefore, instead of confining religion within narrow limits we should expand and convert it into the religion of humanity. This will suit the interests of modern social organisation. With the improvement of the means of communication the big world of today has become very small. For this reason peoples of different countries and religions will now come closer together. Some countries will even become abode of the followers of many diverse religions. Therefore, religious tolerance has now become more indispensable than ever for social organisation.

Religion has had a very important hand in the integration and disintegration of society. Here we find a religion so catholic in its outlook that over-passing the boundaries of even the entire humanity it sees God everywhere and includes in its sphere of worship the entire world of animate and inanimate things. Contrarily, we also find another religion so narrow in its outlook that it has not only set man against man, but also turned him into a demon threatening the very existence of humanity. Should we turn the pages of the history of any country, we will find ample evidence of the fact that religion has been a major factor in the rise and fall of a society. Religion has been a thing of particular national importance in India. Followers of many diverse religions of the world came and lived there. So, this land has been the cradle of many religions. Therefore, it is very necessary for the sake of national integration that all the followers of diverse religions should develop religious tolerance, if the aim is to be achieved.

BASIC EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

To make this possible all the religions should be studied thoroughly and an atmosphere of religious unity should be created by presenting their brighter sides. People have been misled into thinking that basic education is entirely irreligious, that religious education has got no place in it. But the fact is that it gives a due place to character-building and moral education. How can, then, we call it irreligious? Granted that it does not teach any particular religion in a formal way, but it certainly refines character by encouraging religious and moral conduct. During religious festivals pupils are offered opportunities to familiarize themselves with the lives and works of the founders of religions, of saints and of great men. Community celebrations of these festivals encourage cultural intercourse and a new ideal of an integrated human culture is set before them. Daily community prayer strengthens the feeling of tolerance. In brief, basic education is not irreligious, but teaches how to advance towards a world religion by awakening the feeling of tolerance for alien religions while remaining faithful to one's own religion. Indian political system is secular. Basic education is quite consistent with this secularism. Political system is related to social system, which in turn is related to educational system. So, a system of education which ignores political and social needs cannot fulfil the needs of national education.

Another question is whether comparative study of all religions should be included in our educational programme. Here it is feared that the average teacher will see other religions from the standpoint of his own religion and try to impress the superiority upon pupil's mind. This will create an attitude of hostility instead of tolerance. So, a better course would be to avoid comparison and teach the basic principles of all the great religions occasionally during religious festivals. And such knowledge should be imparted not in an abstract philosophical way, but through interesting stories, so that it may be easily grasped by children. The biographies of religious heroes arouse feeling of respect for them in the child's mind. Children are hero-worshippers by nature. They install the images of their chosen heroes and their heroic acts in their hearts, which guide them in their life. As in the case of religion so in that of a biographical study of great men we should not be narrow-minded. We should rather have a broad outlook and familiarise the child with all those great men who have attempted to elevate humanity and human culture irrespective of religions, races, countries and ages to which they belonged.

For this purpose teachers must develop the right outlook and attitude. It matters little if they do not have a deep knowledge of philosophy and the scriptures ; but their hearts should be full of respect and love for the spiritual leaders of the world. Another desirable quality that they should develop is love of truth. They should acquire the habit and ability of knowing, testing and respecting the truth with an independent mind and of understanding religious facts correctly and impartially. They should believe that religion is a sincere search after the spiritual truth, though the ways leading to it may differ. The target is one, though the positions of persons aiming at it may differ, God is one, though the ways of his worship and knowledge may differ. Once some children speaking different tongues were quarelling over a water-melon. All of them wanted to have a water-melon, but not being able to understand one another, the quarrel was unnecessarily going on. In the mean time a person knowing the tongues of all approached. He collected money from them and purchased a melon. Then everybody was satisfied. Similarly, each religion ascertains God and truth in its own peculiar way, though the aim of all religions is but one. Religious education should be imparted with this consideration. Then alone shall we be able to bring down true humanity and true man on this earth.

Regarding the place of religious education in the educational scheme Gandhiji said : We have not allowed a place to religious education in our scheme, because the way in which religions are taught and practised now-a days creates conflict rather than encourage unity. In my opinion, the facts which are to be taught to children are common to all religions. Children can learn these facts from the daily life of their teachers. If the teacher's own life is based on these facts and truths, children, because of their innate tendency of imitation and hero worship, will not feel any difficulty in carrying them out in their own lives. The teacher's personal ideal will give them inspiration.

If we can plan religious education properly along the lines suggested above, we shall be able to awaken the feelings of tolerance, fraternity, liberty, love and sympathy in children. They will see unity in diversity and thus acquire faith in one God, which will inculcate in human society the idea of fatherhood of God and brotherhood of all men.

Chapter IX

Individual and Society

Individual and society are correlated. Society consists of individuals and individuals cannot possibly effect their development apart from society. Developed individual will develop society and individual development will take place in a developing society alone. Although society gains power from individual only, yet in the course of time society overpowers the individual. That is why some sort of regulation or order is required to effect co-ordination and avoid conflict between the powers of individuals and society. Order is mainly of two types—cultural and political. Society sometimes forgets individual differences and tries to cast all man in the same mould. But every man has peculiarities which make him different from every, other, man. This is what is known as diversity in unity. Every man has got a place in society. Therefore, a progressive society should allow man opportunities to develop his peculiarities. Sometimes in the attempt to effect unity among men the independent individuality of man is made to suffer, which deforms human personality and threatens the peace of society. Thus society misses the contribution which a freely and normally developed individual could make. Therefore, we feel the need of adopting a middle path between the extremes of individualism and collectivism in order to effect balance in society, which will offer every individual opportunities to develop his own peculiar qualities and also urge him to fulfil his duties towards society. It is also necessary to formulate laws so that society may give proper treatment to individuals under different circumstances.

Individual is part of society. He has no right to deprive society of his services while being a part thereof. This is why law makes suicide an offence and it is considered sinful. Therefore, even if we sometimes desire to live apart from society, the motive should always be attainment of social good through self-realisation.

The goal of education to-day has become too narrow and it is being increasingly narrowed down to earning one's living. But the true goal consists in developing life in a harmonious

way to its perfection. For this purpose man must remain a part of society. Education aims at the formation of character which cannot be possible in seclusion. The development and refinement of life will take place in such a spiritual society as will be founded on truth, non-violence, justice and love. There will be no room in it for any sort of economic, social, religious or political discrimination or exploitation. An order of this type can be brought about only through the decentralisation of economic and social systems. Home and village industries have a prominent place in this type of order. Basic education has been made craft-centred with this aim in view. Pupils will thus form the habit of self-dependence from the very beginning. They will take part in group industries and will grow up in a healthy atmosphere of mutual co-operation.

The order that is needed in the economic sphere is desirable in the social sphere also. Indian socialism conceives such a classless and casteless social order which will be based on the principle of co-operation, will be self-sufficient and in which physical labour will not be held in contempt. In that order everyone will be willing to do for himself as well as for others even the most trifling job when the occasion arises. No man will be allowed to force others to do for him a job which he himself would not like to do. Every job will be respected as sacred. The worker will get whatever he deserves by way of remuneration and respect.

Even in political sphere morality is fully needed. There too, according to the Indian ideals, the means have the same importance as the end or its accomplishment has. A country cannot be happy and prosperous merely by the attainment of freedom. Morality and character too are equally necessary. The aim of society and the character of individual need mutual co-ordination, because the latter is the very image of society.

To-day healthy relation between individual and society appears to be breaking up. Personal interest is prevailing upon the interest of society. As a result of this horrible scenes of discord are seen at every step of social life. Neither, society allows equal facilities to all for their development, nor the individual is willing to sacrifice his personal interest for the sake of social good. Every member of society to-day wishes to derive maximum gain out of minimum effort. The high ideal of enjoying

sweets of one's own labour has now become a mere verbal one. The desire to get maximum comforts and benefits through the least of labour is on the increase, Jealousy, ill-will, conflict and exploitation are prevailing everywhere. The greed for personal comfort and gain has eclipsed social ease and peace.

The selfish desire of investing the minimum and gaining the maximum is actuated by the acquisitive tendency of man. When an individual loses faith in society, he resorts to acquisition to ensure his existence and safety. This position is fatal for social order can be avoided only by establishing truth and non-violence in society. It becomes possible only when every member of society claims as much as he actually earns through his labour. This will create confidence in labour. Man will advance towards, self-sufficiency and he will have more and more confidence in his own self.

It is true that man will continue to fulfil his life's needs by his own labour ; but it is not possible for him to succeed in this attempt without the co-operation of the other members of society. Therefore, together with self dependence mutual dependence also is essential. All men engaged in the attempt of fulfilling their life's needs will be equal from the standpoint of labour. The farmer will give food to the weaver. The weaver will give cloth to the farmer. This will be a healthy sort of co-dependence which will develop in them the feeling of equality on the basis of the equality of labour. Let everyone work according to his capacity and get according to his needs. This is the basic formula of social equilibrium.

How shall we get rid of this personal and social rivalry ? How shall the individual be assured of his safety ? How shall society provide the individual facilities for development ? How shall we create the feeling of self-confidence in him ? The individual receives nourishment from society throughout his life and society gets the benefit of his services. How can they be made to fulfil their duties towards each other ? To solve these problems we have to revolutionize our thinking and feeling. Let our personal and social life have such a revolutionary change that the individual may regain confidence in society and become devoted to it.

Basic education prepares the ground for this sort of revolution. A

basic school is organised on the pattern of a democratic society. So, from the very start the child begins to form the habit of living in society as a part of whole. He considers it his duty to participate in the co-operative life of the school. When children habitually living in this way will grow up and become citizens, then surely they will have the feelings of respect for labour, mutual love and sympathy and co-operativeness. The guiding formula of their life will be dignity in labour and pleasure in service. This is the means of social happiness and prosperity and also the ideal of self-abnegation and austerity. It will establish equilibrium between individual and society.

Society is immortal. Its immortality consists in its progressiveness. The evolution of culture and civilization takes centuries of ceaseless effort. It is the duty of the individual to help this course of evolution by his own contribution. With the progress of society there is also a corresponding increase in the material comforts of the future members of society.

Therefore, the proper aim of education is that every individual should effect his own development to the maximum degree by perfecting his personal qualities and should also make his best contribution to the development of society.

Chapter X

Social Education through Basic education

India is a free democracy. Social education has got much more importance in the democratic system than in any other system. The success and progress of democracy depends on public education. In India the percentage of the educated is very low. So, proper steps are being taken to make the education of children compulsory and we are educating all the children under a definite age level within a certain period under various plans. Plans of adult education too are being implemented. In the beginning mere literacy was the aim of adult education; but later in the post-independence period of national awakening the consideration of adult franchise and the rights and duties of citizens of a free country necessitated to expand this narrow aim and include in it many other virtues of social education. On this basis the following things are now included in the aim of adult education :

1. Spread of literacy among adults of advanced age.
2. Familiarising adults with the democratic system and its functions and developing in them qualities appropriate to the citizens of a democratic country.
3. Imparting knowledge of the history and geography of the country and of the influences of the latter on society.
4. Emphasizing the importance of personal and collective hygiene and its practice.
5. Instruction of industries and crafts and knowledge of the ways of their improvement as also the knowledge and practice of the methods of improving economic conditions.
6. Refinement of sentiments through art, literature, music, dance and other aesthetic activities.
7. Cultivation of goodwill for one another by developing the

spirit of tolerance and coexistence ; creating faith in the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of all men ; and moral education.

8. Knowledge of rules of hygiene for the sake of personal and social health : knowledge of what pure life is, what proper diet is, what sort of clothes should one put on, how to keep the house in order, how to avoid diseases, how children should be brought up and so on.

This is a bare outline of the detailed programme and can be easily adapted to fresh needs.

Now the question to be considered is how to carry out this programme ? Should one open separate adult education centres ? What arrangements should we make to bring adults to those centres ? How will they attract adults ? Usually adults spend the whole day in their jobs and get leisure for relaxation in the evening only. Often this is the time fixed for their education by the centres. That is why teachers generally complain that adults absent themselves from classes. The problem was once put before Gandhiji. He immediately suggested the solution that if adults do not come to centres, let the school go to adults. It obviously meant that the school should not be confined within the four walls of a building, but should expand to include home and community in it. School activities should be so arranged and contact with community so established that schools may assume the form of village or community centres.

This is not a mere imagination. Basic schools which have been organised properly and which offer opportunities to children to strengthen social tendencies can in no way leave society unaffected by their influence. The pure and healthy life that children will habitually live in school community will go with them to their homes. Occasionally they will arrange house-cleaning programmes which will inspire adults to participate in them and maintain the cleanness of the places which children took pains to clean. This will also be the case with the observance of rules of hygiene. Thus a clean and healthy atmosphere will extend from school to home and from home to the entire community.

Children will try to live in school as the members of a democratic society. They will discuss among themselves things like organisations, franchise, rights and duties. So, this aspect of civic education also will

enter homes. In connection with the scheme of making education useful to society through contact with society Vinobaji has said that school and home are to be necessarily connected and that this can be done only when home enters school and school enters home. The atmosphere of school should be exactly as we have at home. By this scheme children will carry education from school to home and will make the entire atmosphere charged with education.

Children will receive training of basic industries uniformly in school. They will learn them in a systematic way, will acquire the understanding of their 'how' and 'why' and will thus make them medium of their education. Concerning the choice of crafts it has been advised that those crafts should be chosen which fit in with the surroundings of children. It is quite evident that children will usually adopt crafts which belong to their region. Thus they will keep in active touch with their family vocations. Agriculture is the national industry of India. It is also a basic industry in basic education. Thus the conditions are in its favour. If some other basic industry is also introduced, it will serve as a complementary industry in the farmer's life, because the Indian farmer has to go without work during some months of the year. The complementary industry will provide him with work during his leisure time. School and children will be the carriers of industrial education also to adults.

Productive industry can be made the medium of children's education and of adult education also. Vinobaji says that education has a natural relation with life and its activities. The elements of education are inherent in work. So, workers in the field of adult education should take care to find out the deficiencies in what the adults learn through work and impart them the knowledge complementary to it. This can be done only if they participate in the individual lives and occupations of adults and try to make up for their deficiencies.

Basic education is based on the co-ordination of intellect and physical labour. Most educated people of to-day take physical labour as a mechanical drudgery requiring no intelligence and no skill. Our social organisation of today is grounded in this discrimination between physical and intellectual work. Our society is divided into the two sections one of which carries the whole burden of physical labour allowing no room for intellectual development and the other, the intellectual section,

thrives on the labour put in by the former. The intellectual thinks that labour put is not only unnecessary, but also far beneath his dignity. A man having no work to do spoils his mind and morals. So, work should necessarily be made a means not only of the education of children but also of adults. We can also adopt the principle of production and self-sufficiency as the aim of work. Thus the dignity of physical labour will be enhanced, manual work will acquire educational value and production the skill to earn one's living more easily though all this is of secondary importance. There is a special purpose behind it. It lays down the very foundation of a new way of life over which a new society will be built up. When the individual gains economic self-sufficiency and is thus enabled to earn his living through his own labour, then alone can he fulfil his responsibilities of building up a refined society and grasp the full meaning of his personal and social right and duties. A democracy absolutely free from exploitation can be built up only on the foundation of work done for self-sufficiency. The sense of self-sufficiency provides us successfully with the necessary equipment for physical, mental, social, economic and moral aspects of life.

Our Prime Minister, Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru, once expressed his view of Basic education thus: We require such type of education as may give us men able to carry on our national programme and fulfil the social aims of free India. I wish you all to engage in some sort of productive work. Each of you eats food, wears clothes and lives in a house. You become a burden on society if you do not produce at least as much as you consume. You thus steal things produced by others. We want a society in which every individual produces something. If an individual wishes to be a good producer, he should do his work with understanding. Therefore, our education, both physical and intellectual, should be the ideal one.

Village farmers and labourers are generally called uneducated; but they are educated so far as work and labour is concerned. This is to-say, they have knowledge, they have experience and they are capable of fulfilling their needs. On the contrary, the so-called educated people are really uneducated in this respect. Therefore, education should be so planned that farmers and labourers may be educated and develop a keen intellect, and the sense of dignity of labour may be awakened among the educated adults.

Our ancestors laid stress on a righteous and healthy life. They cultivated righteousness through social and cultural education, not through a mere bookish learning. Monasteries, temples and festivals were the centres of education. Let us illustrate this point with the examples of scriptures, folk tales, folk songs and folk dances. All these have been continuing for centuries as before. This continuity does not owe its existence to mere books. That is why Rabindra Nath Tagore also started giving new life to Indian culture in rural atmosphere. His Shantiniketan has now become a centre of rural uplift. He tried to strengthen the foundation of culture through almost all types of education based on direct experiences such as celebrations, festivals, folk dances and folk songs etc.

Basic schools arrange for healthy recreation through cultural and constructive programmes on the occasions of holy days and festivals. They try to celebrate these festivals collectively inside the school. Such occasions easily provide opportunities for creating an educative atmosphere simultaneously with recreation through the interesting programmes of exhibitions, debates, lectures, dramas, folk songs and folk dances. In the traditional system they close the schools during festivals; but the new system of basic education makes such occasions a means of sociological study and utilises them in the interest of the education of children and their guardians. Such types of programmes are the novel features of Basic system for which reason it is well known as the new education.

In the original scheme of Basic education Gandhiji made education co-extensive with life by saying that its sphere extended from conception to death, or from first birth to last breath. Usually it is said that adult education is posterior to child education; but when education is supposed to begin with conception, then it should be granted that education begins with the education of mothers, sisters and guardians. So adult education is not of secondary, but of primary importance in national reconstruction. Basic education presents such a programme through its scheme of the socialisation of education as makes the education of children practical and full of life by the contact of society instead of divorcing it from society. Thus the Basic school is so reorganised that it also becomes a centre of social education.

Chapter XI

Sarvodaya and Basic education

Indian socialism goes further than the Western ideal of 'greatest good of the greatest number' and conceives the goal as the 'good of all' (Sarvodaya). This conception of universal good puts individual development and the development of entire humanity on an equal level. Dr. Radhakrishnan says that *Sarvodaya* is the name of an all-round development of individual and society in political, economic, social, cultural, religious and all other aspects.

According to this conception every individual member of society will be a free thinker, live an independent life, be self-dependent, believe in the dignity of labour, derive pleasure out of service, refuse to believe in superstitions, and have a rational and scientific outlook. The social structure will not allow discrimination between the rich and the poor, capitalist and labourer, landlord and tenant-farmer. All will be equal and have fraternity among themselves. None will be deprived of the necessities of life and none will be extravagant in the use of things. Production will aim at fulfilling general needs. Profiteering will not be the motive behind it. The economic policy will be guided by the aim of rendering service and help to society by producing things of common utility. Scientific inventions and equipment will not be controlled by capitalists and those who are invested with authority. The profits derived from them will be shared by all. Exclusive emphasis will not be laid on the progress of physical science, but mental and spiritual sciences too will be allowed to develop. Thus the latter will introduce the concept of non-violence in our material progress. 'Simple living and high thinking' will be our motto. The aim of trade and commerce is to organise the produce of land in such a way that the entire needs of the whole of humanity may be fulfilled. The aim of science is to create universal interest in all things and spread knowledge of all things. The aim of political science is that all the citizens of the country should live together in peace, love and mutual co-operation, have regard for justice and make equal progress. Similarly, religion aims at creating true faith in all.

This ideal of *Sarvodaya* can be materialised if man leads a simple life and limits his needs. Man should also take care that in the fulfilment of his needs he should be self-dependent, should shun leaning on others for support and should ordinarily resort to mutual co-operation as far as possible. Similarly, non-possession too becomes a prominent feature of our social organisation. Accordingly, man will not amass things unnecessarily. If one does so, he deprives some other man of their use. This is social injustice. Physical labour is another important thing which is usually held in contempt now-a-days. It is generally observed that the more cultured one becomes, the less labour he wants to do. The current values of our social organisation need radical change so that everyone may give up his attitude of disrespect for physical labour as something inferior and give it due respect. Basic education includes all these things in its programme by which the child will become self-dependent, will live a simple life, and will care for others' needs while fulfilling his own. This will be the direct result of the kind of social life that he will live in the school. Industry-centered education will make him labour-minded. Thus the child will be equipped with ideas, conduct and impressions appropriate to the *Sarvodaya* social organisation.

For the good of all education should be easily available to all so that the rich and the poor may get its benefit equally. Mahatma Gandhi said that all should have equal right to education even as we have equal right to air and water. There should be no discrimination of any sort in our educational system. From this very standpoint basic education has proposed an eight year plan of compulsory education, according to which all will be imparted education through the same method on the same level. The rich and the poor both will do labour equally. Basic crafts will be chosen for them in conformity with their social and natural surroundings and they will be educated through them. Our fields and workshops will be our schools, in which all children will receive education through work. According to the ideals of *Sarvodaya* education ought to possess the following features, all of which are found in the basic system :—

(1) Education should aim at the physical, mental, moral and spiritual development of every man, so that he may become healthy, happy, co-operative, self-dependent, competent, inclined to render service to others, broadminded, tolerant and a lover of humanity.

This can be achieved by changing the heart of man, by reconstructing man. This is revolution. Revolution truly means revolution of the existing values of life. It takes place first in the hearts and then in society. Where there is no change of hearts, no true revolution can be there. Change of ideology too contributes to revolution. Therefore, it has been suggested that the new education should be introduced in all the villages simultaneously so that the villages may make headway by mutual support. The new educational system should not be confined within the four walls of the schools. Schools imparting the new education, can, by using social atmosphere as the means of education, well become centres of a widely spread social revolution. The spirit of non-violence will gradually spread by means of basic education. A wonderful revolution will take place in society, which will accomplish human good.

Along with revaluation of values decentralisation of economy and administrative machinery too is necessary to bring about this revolution. Love and affection are indispensable for social life and they can be created by intimate mutual relation which is possible in small social groups only, not in bigger ones. The Sarvodaya economy aims at human good, not merely at the production of material things. In the centralised economy heavy machinery is used and it is owned by a handful of capitalists who exploit human labour, increase production unnecessarily, and try to sell it in the world market at the risk of world peace. In India there is no dearth of working hands; the dearth is of work. Industries should properly aim not only at the increase of production, but at securing employment for the greatest possible number of men, which can only be done by decentralisation of economy. Cottage, village and national industries can give a start to this process of decentralisation. The basic industries introduced in schools and reorganisation of school community will give a good elementary knowledge of how to effect this process of decentralisation.

In the social organisation of Sarvodaya the individual will have full liberty of developing his entire personality and the entire society will also be elevated. The individual will adopt the motto of 'live for others' instead of 'live and let others live', because he will understand that what he will contribute to society will be distributed by society among all the individuals including his own self. When new idea like this become widely spread, then a new culture is born. Therefore, it is conceived that by the new education the construction of a new society and a new man will become possible.

Chapter XII

Basic education and World Peace

Although life-struggle and capacity for survival have been recognised as causes of evolution, yet the humanity and superiority of man consists in reducing the intensity of life-struggle. Non-violent means of development make man superior to animals. People think that war and strife too are essential parts of the struggle for life. In every war to end war lie the seeds of a future war. The reason is that man has not grown up morally as much as he has grown up intellectually and materially. The exclusive increase of intellectual and physical power is intensifying the threat of war more and more. Most of the scientific inventions of this age, which could well be made a means of world peace and contentment, are being used for the purposes of destruction. People forget that empires cannot be built by brute force alone. Sovereignty founded on love and sympathy is more dignified and lasting. Along with physical and intellectual strength moral strength also is very necessary for progress and co-existence. So, true education, according to the ideal of basic education, is that which can effect a balanced development of the whole personality by a uniform development of body, mind and soul.

Today physical strength appears to have been almost entirely divorced from spiritual strength. This is leading the world towards destruction. So, to save the world from imminent destruction it needs to be tied by moral and spiritual bonds. This can be done only by a suitable scheme of education, because education is the only means of moulding life in a desirable way and of teaching the art of living in society. Basic education conceives the end of education as the creation of a balanced personality in which individual peculiarities are fully developed so that the individual may become useful for society.

Activity is a fundamental instinct of man, by which he develops his power while fulfilling the needs and out of which he derives pleasure in his personal and social life. When he takes some raw object from nature and gives it a socially useful shape, he gives beauty to it and increases its value. Thus his inner power and self-confidence are

enhanced.

The greatest evil that prevails today is the tendency to connect work with religion and art, for which reason man has been reduced to a mere part of machine. The evil has almost disorganised family and social life and poisoned international relations. The original source of this evil is materialism. People wrongly think that machines will finish work in a little time and will thus allow ample time for the development of man. In the centralised industries of this sort man works only for the sake of money and his outlook becomes increasingly materialistic. He wants to purchase his happiness and comfort by money. In every respect his needs and desires of higher life become increasingly complex and his ways of living become luxurious. Finally he reaches a stage when things desired by him become hard to get, for which reason the desire of imperialistic expansion and the probabilities of war consequent upon it go on increasing. The more desirable thing is to develop such an economic system as may be conducive to peace and the spirit of co-existence. Production too should be so limited that it may not become a cause of war. Basic education aims at this very sort of economic policy.

So long as nations make it their only business to encourage materialism and raise the standard of living, world peace will remain a mere dream, because national needs will strengthen the roots of imperialism, national wealth will be spent on armies, revolts will be on the increase, ideologies will clash and all this result in widely spread agitation. Basic education conceives a society in which people will have an understanding of their duties and responsibilities and will habitually fulfil them. They will possess the spirit of love and cooperation. They will cultivate the virtue of self-dependence through labour. There will be coordination in their economic, social and political activities, which will be firmly based on national industries, agriculture and other co-operative industries. In other words, basic education teaches man the art of living which binds heart to heart and yields spiritual pleasure. Basic education is not merely the art which teaches how to earn money. In the craze to earn money man accumulates lifeless objects only and misses the precious gem of life.

Society composed of self-dependent, co-operative and self-supporting individuals will, it is hoped, be successful in releasing itself from the

claws of colonialism. This will be a bloodless, non-violent social revolution which is still needed in many big regions of the world. One who keeps others in subjugation is always anxious to keep his own freedom intact. Let us be free and keep others free. * This is the healthy spirit of co-existence. Attaining freedom and keeping it intact depends on the type of social organisation outlined above.

On the one hand the roots of cold war are being supplied nourishment and on the other there is also going on a talk of disarmament. But if our economic and social organisation goes on raising our standard of living and increasing our material needs, then disarmament will ever remain a dream. Generally it is said that people do not want war and that it is the state which bears this responsibility. But the truth is that the roots of war are lying deep in the life of nations. It is not only the profiteers and capitalists and the politics of states on which the responsibility of war lies. If we go deeper, we will find that the real cause of war lies in the unnecessary elevation of standard of life. The basic needs of man in every country are almost the same.

Therefore, if we want to strengthen the spirit of co-existence for the sake of world peace, then everyone of us should restrict his needs and note the extent to which they can be fulfilled by the gifts of nature and the resources of earth. An undesirable inequality in the distribution of these things is the basic cause of violence and injustice and it shakes the very foundation of world peace. So, everyone should try his best to carry out the ideals indicated above in his life so that these ideals may be firmly established in society. Then alone can the world seated on the volcano of war escape from the danger of its eruption.

If we look at the programme of Basic education, we will clearly see that by giving training of fulfilling one's basic needs by one's own labour we will end those institutions which give birth to violence and unrest. The ideal to which this programme aims is that of a self-inspired, self-guided and self-sufficient society in which individuals will be inspired by the ideals of unity, equality and justice, will leave a self-disciplined and simple life, will care for the needs of others while fulfilling their own needs, and will take the entire humanity as their own family. Thus the roots of non-violence, truth, justice and liberty will be strengthened in our country, in foreign countries, in the international sphere and everywhere, and so the ever scorched soul of the world will rest in peace.

Chapter XIII

Propagation of Basic education

Basic education was introduced more than twenty years ago. During this period the Central Government and State Governments have done their best for its propagation. In the field of primary education it has come out of the experimental stage and has now become a well recognised system. In spite of this, Basic schools are yet far less in number than non-basic ones.

In the beginning basic education was introduced in villages. Here too the policy of compact area was adopted. Basic education scheme was introduced in all the schools of one compact area and gradually this area was expanded. The result was that small areas of this type were surrounded by bigger areas where schools were run along traditional lines. The schools and workers of these compact areas felt lonely. The purpose of inspiring the non-basic areas through a healthy intercourse proved successful. Contrarily to what was expected an unhealthy atmosphere of rivalry was created and progress was arrested.

Secondly, due to the implementation of this scheme in rural areas only and its non-implementation in urban areas created the wrong impression that this was an inferior type of education and meant for villagers only. This wrong idea also obstructed the progress of basic education.

This introduction of crafts in the scheme necessitated an increase in school equipment. On the other hand, there was a dearth of trained teachers. Under such circumstances it could not spread widely in such a little time.

Taking these things into consideration the Central and State Governments adopted the policy that those features of the basic education programme which could be implemented under the existing circumstances should be introduced uniformly in all the schools. It was a very wise step and accordingly the States have prepared such curricula as could be introduced in rural and urban schools equally well. This would

reduce the differences between basic and non-basic schools and finally convert all the schools into completely basic schools by gradually steering them in this direction.

In order to increase the number of trained teachers sufficiently the number of training institutes has been increased as well as that of trainees. Attempts are also being made to increase their number by arranging short-term training courses, training camps, seminars etc.

More attention is being paid to improving school equipment and raising the standard of teachers than to school buildings. The dearth of buildings and teachers is being partially covered by introducing shift system. Villages are being encouraged to construct school buildings by giving 50% grant. Villagers have accorded ample assistance in the form of labour, material and money, and construction work is going on. Sufficient expenditure can be saved by implementing the plan of co-education in the primary stages. Teachers are being provided more facilities by constructing residential houses for them. Attention is being paid to raising teachers' salaries and they can now be better off than they were formerly. Proper steps are yet to be taken to attract properly qualified teachers in the service of the education department.

Thus it is hoped that during the second five year plan 75% teachers will be trained and every village having a population of five hundred will have its own school. Along with this progress care shall also be taken to make all the schools uniform.

So, it is now being proposed that the fundamental elements of basic education should properly and uniformly be introduced in all the schools. The proposed programme can be analysed into the following five points :—

A. Practice of pure and healthy life.

B. Practice of self-dependence.

C. Practice of basic industries.

D. Practice of citizenship.

E. Cultural and recreative activities.

A. Practice of pure and healthy life

(i) Cleaning of children's bodies and clothes should take place under teacher's supervision. Cleanliness parades should be held regularly and they should be supervised by the teacher. Contact should be established between guardians and doctors. Children should be imparted education in hygiene.

(ii) Cleaning and decoration of school should be a part of the social life of the school. Pits for rubbish, urinals and latrines should be constructed and their proper use should be arranged and cooperation of guardians should be sought as far as possible.

B. Practice of self-dependence

- (1) Proper arrangement of drinking water.
- (2) Mending, washing, ironing and folding clothes.
- (3) Manufacturing mats, brooms and small baskets.
- (4) Decoration with ordinary village paints.
- (5) Minor repairs of buildings.
- (6) Arranging refreshments.
- (7) Running school co-operative store, post-office and dispensary.
- (8) Map drawing.

C. Practice of basic craft

Although basic crafts are an important part of a basic school, yet due to the death of trained teachers they cannot be introduced in all schools immediately. So, according to the existing circumstances, interesting activities can be selected as substitute which can in due course be developed into basic industries. The following activities are recommended :

- (1) Ordinary farming and gardening—growing vegetables and flowers.
- (2) Maintaining school garden and flower-pots.
- (3) Observation and study of village agriculture, horticulture and local industries.
- (4) Spinning; clay work, paper and vignette work, making of ropes, baskets, brooms, mats ; bamboo-work and other similar local

industries.

- (5) Preparing manure and utilising refuse.
- (6) Raising plants and protecting them from cattle.

D. *Practice of citizenship*

- (1) Establishing children's council and cabinet ; learning practical duties and rights through acts ; practice of fulfilling responsibilities ; lectures before a gathering ; recital : conducting meetings, elections etc.
- (2) Acquiring knowledge of history, geography, economics and sociology of the village and its neighbourhood and later on, of the state, the country and the world.
- (3) Acquaintance with the institutions of public administration and functions of various offices.
- (4) Planning social service programmes.
- (5) Arranging celebration of festivals.

E. *Cultural and recreative activities*

- (1) Arranging in the school healthy games and exercises and dance, drama etc. on special occasions.
- (2) Hoisting and saluting the national flag.
- (3) Daily prayer and recital of the national song etc.
- (4) Celebrating social, national religious and local festivals and establishing contact with guardians.
- (5) Arranging annual functions, guardians' day etc.
- (6) Acquaintances with folk songs, folk dances, and folk literature.
- (7) Acquaintance with local sayings, proverbs and parables.
- (8) Arranging exhibitions.
- (9) Managing school magazine.
- (10) Collecting interesting things.
- (11) Arranging educational tours.

This list is not exhaustive. Other activities of a similar type may also be included, which will also be interesting and pleasurable to children, will satisfy their thirst for knowledge and encourage them to learn more and more. Human life is full of purposive activities. It is the duty of an intelligent teacher to select those activities which have educational value. If a school can create children's interest in these

activities, can awaken their faith in labour, and can sharpen their desire to gain knowledge, then it will make a good advance towards the programme of the best basic school.

The reader, after a consideration of the recommendations made above, will be assured that these activities can be easily adopted and that they need neither extraordinary equipment nor highly trained teachers. In this way this work of national education can be started immediately in all the primary schools.

Concluding Remarks

Action is the essence of life, the history of human race. It is the object of sociological study. Man has utilised natural resources and thus built up his life and raised it higher. He experimented with various types of social organisation and gained better knowledge. This is the history of education of man. Realising the imperfections of a mere book-centred education and making action the vehicle of education stands on this background.

Education has been recognised as an important factor in both individual and social development. Individual development is intimately related with social development. Basic education has taken due note of this relation and has effected coordination between them. The seeds of human social organisation and world peace are inherent in it. In this scientific age of competition for progress one country is trying to outstrip another. Everyone is alarmed by the prospect of war. Is it progress or is it destruction? This will be the bankruptcy of human culture. Let Science be united with non-violence. If we want to save humanity, we will have to control science by developing the spirit of non-violence. Basic education aims at the attainment of this end by a co-ordinated education of hands, heart and head.

India is a free nation. Our system of administration is democratic. Establishing a socialist-organisation is our goal. We are to effect a balance between the freedom of individual and that of society. It is our keen desire to allow all individuals equal opportunities for progress and to accelerate social progress. Therefore, equality has a prominent place in our conception of social organisation. There will be no place in it for the differences of race, class, language, religion etc. Discrimination is fatal for social organisation. So, education should possess the capacity of establishing unity in diversity. Basic education proposes programme of fulfilling this aim by the co-ordination of action and knowledge. It prepares the ground for decentralising economy and administration by according a prominent place to industries in education and by socialising schools. It is a very potent means of keeping freedom in-

tact. In the new social organisation the individual will be allowed maximum freedom and will also be made the guardian of social freedom. It will be the social organisation according to the Sarvodaya ideal, in which good of all will be the aim ; all will be happy and there will be no discrimination of any kind. There will be justice ; there will be equality ; and there will be no exploiters.

Our country won freedom about fifteen years ago. Our five year plans are working out reconstruction of the country. To attain this end we are trying to utilise fully the available resources and man-power. We have inexhaustible natural resources. We have to discover and utilise them for the prosperity of the country. So, we need labourers, craftsmen and scientists. That is, our whole national life should be moulded according to this need, and the means for this purpose is education. The end can be attained when the means are appropriate to it. Basic education lays emphasis on action, enhances the dignity of labour, arranges programmes of educative activity and thus creates a scientific outlook. In this way this scheme of education fully contributes to our plans of national reconstruction. Shri Vinoba, the spiritual successor of Gandhiji, has started a unique social revolution by his Bhoodan (donation of land) movement. The State Governments also have proposed and implemented a programme of social revolution by the abolition of Zamindari system (landlordism). Just as Gandhiji surprised the world by winning freedom for India through non-violence, so Shri Vinoba surprised it by effecting change of heart through Bhoodan (donation of land) Sampattidan (donation of property), Jeewandan (donation of life) and similar other movements. He is leading these movements quite successfully. He is getting millions of acres of land, even whole villages in donation. We have not yet formed the proper solution of problems arising in connection with distribution of land donated in Bhoodan, rehabilitation of labourers on land, organisation of villages etc. Agriculture is our national industry. Agrarian problems are our national problems. Villages are the back-bone of our nation. Therefore, we are contemplating to reach our ideal of Ramarajya by establishing the reign of villages. This cannot be achieved without proper education. The new education gives us strength to carry out this programme.

So, Basic education, simultaneously with being a recognised art of education, is the best instrument of social reconstruction. According to

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Gandhiji the new education is the foundation of social revolution, because it will so affect children's minds that they will automatically advance in the direction of social revolution. A study of social problems and an attempt to solve them should be an important feature of education. Simultaneously with the fulfilment of individual and social needs natural and social surroundings should also be studied. As a matter of fact, this should be the medium of education. By this alone will the child receive complete education; his physical, mental and moral capacities will develop and his personality will be remoulded. This is the scheme of new education which aims at the reconstruction of man and society.

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